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Russell Lays Viet Impasse To Instability

By Warren Unna

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Chairman Richard B. Russell (D-Ga.) of the Senate Armed Services Committee emerged from a closed hearing yesterday declaring he could foresee only an "endless stalemate" in South Viet-Nam unless the Vietnamese find themselves a stable government.

"Up to now we have been losing ground instead of gaining it. The miracle to me is that they can carry on the war as well as they have with the changing-chair government that they have had," Russell declared after hearing secret testimony from John A. McCone, director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

But neither Russell, nor any of the other Capitol Hill leaders, were leading the way yesterday to any change in U.S. policy towards South Viet-Nam.

Russell, who in a New Year's Eve interview had warned that the time had about arrived for a re-evaluation of U.S. policy, said in another interview with United Press International last weekend that he was not trying to rewrite Administration policy, but was just looking into the military aspects of the Vietnamese situation.

Confronted With Option

President Johnson is known to have confronted an unhappy Russell with the option of having the United States pull out of South Viet-Nam altogether. Russell reportedly acknowledged to the President that this would be no solution either.

Chairman J. W. Fulbright (D-Ark.) of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee also is known to have grave misgivings about the U.S. involvement in South Viet-Nam.

But his Committee reportedly is divided between "hawks," who want to see the United States step up its effort by attacking Communist North Viet-Nam, and "doves," who want to explore the possibility of negotiating a neutral Viet-Nam with the Communists.

Fulbright's Committee heard testimony from Secretary of State Dean Rusk last week and has scheduled another closed hearing with him Friday.

Others Keep in Touch

Chairman L. Mendel Rivers (D-S.C.) of the House Armed Services Committee has joined in the great congressional concern about South Viet-Nam but has given no indication what he or his Committee intends to do about it.

Chairman John Stennis (D-Miss.) of the Senate Preparedness Subcommittee said his group last held hearings on South Viet-Nam in September, has been "keeping in touch" since, but has yet to plan beyond that.

The parent Senate Armed Services Committee is expected to get into some aspects of the Vietnamese situation within a few weeks when it

summons Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara to justify military budget requests for the 1966 fiscal year.

On a CBS News Viet-Nam report telecast over Station WTOP last night, Sen. Wayne Morse (D-Ore.) again urged that the United States pass its Viet-Nam headache to the United Nations.

But Morse's was a lone cry.

Essentially, the Congress, fresh with ideas on other subjects in its new session, was showing that it is just as baffled and frustrated over what the United States should do in South Viet-Nam as the Administration is.

Meanwhile, the State Department said that discussions will be resumed with South Viet-Nam government on additional U.S. assistance to cope with the Communist threat to that country.

The announcement ended a three-week freeze in discussions of additional support, although regular U.S. economic and military support had never been interrupted.

The announcement, made yesterday by Press Officer Robert J. McCloskey, stemmed from a weekend accord in which top Vietnamese military and civilian leaders reached an compromise, reaffirming the military decision to leave affairs of state in the hands of a civilian government.